PEACE CORPS

volunteer

OCTOBER 1966

New hosts: Libya and Paraguay

Two more nations, Libya and Paraguay, have been added to the list of countries served by Peace Corps Volunteers.

Libya received its first Volunteers in September; Paraguay is scheduled to greet its first project in December.

Most of the 18 Volunteers in the Libya group are teaching in the secondary schools of small communities in the North African nation. Several of the Volunteers are employed in institutions of higher learning in the cities. Besides their regular teaching assignments, the Volunteers plan to become involved in secondary activities such as setting up English clubs and organizing sports teams.

Willard Whitman is the Peace Corps director in Libya. He was formerly deputy director in Turkey and more recently has been director in Pakistan.

Thirty-one Volunteers will launch the Paraguay project next winter. They will be engaged as agriculture extension workers, home economists and university instructors. The group is expected to begin training in October.

Talent scouts wanted

The Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City asks Peace Corps Volunteers to scout talent for its Second International University Choral Festival in 1968.

The center is on the lookout for outstanding foreign university choruses to take part in the second festival, a follow-up to the successful festival held in September, 1965. At that time, 20 university choruses from 16 countries performed at Lincoln Center and on subsequent concert tours.

Volunteers who know of exceptional university choruses are requested to send the name of the chorus, its conductor or manager, and its university, along with brief comments on its ability to Mr. James R. Bjorge, Director, International University Choral Festival, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Inc., 1960 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023.

Volunteer dies

A freak electrical accident in a hotel room in Korat, Thailand, claimed the life of Volunteer Lowell E. Dunn on August 23.

Dunn, 25, was playing cards with two other Volunteers in the room when a short circuit in the hotel wiring system caused the lights to go out. Dunn responded by going to the light switch, and when he touched it his body acted as a conductor for the current. He died instantly.

Dunn was in Korat, 150 miles northeast of Bangkok, to attend an agricultural conference sponsored by the host government.

The Thai government held a Buddhist memorial service for Dunn, and the community development and agriculture officials with whom he worked sent a floral tribute to the Peace Corps office in Bangkok.

Dunn had been in Thailand for more than a year and a half. He is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. James L. Dunn of Flat River, Mo.; a sister, and two brothers, including his twin.

New Peace Corps book

A book titled *The Peace Corps: Kindlers of the Spark*, has been published by The Macmillan Company, New York. The author, Edna McGuire, spent three months interviewing some 140 Volunteers in five nations (Ecuador, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, India and Malaysia), and the result is a 224-page volume of observations about Volunteer work. An introduction to the book was written by Donovan McClure, a former associate director of the Peace Corps who is now country director in Turkey.

New members sought

The American Foreign Service Association has invited Peace Corps staff members to join the organization.

In its goal to attain an active professional membership of 10,000, AFSA recently launched a campaign to attract 3,665 new members, including 315 Peace Corps staffers. Others eligible for membership are Foreign Service Officers, Foreign Service Staff personnel, AID and USIA employes, and higher level Civil Service employes in the Department of State. Active membership can be maintained in Washington or during assignment abroad. Annual dues are now $10.

The non-profit association is an outgrowth of a group formed in 1918. All members receive the monthly *Foreign Service Journal*. Other benefits include a book club, consumer information and discounts on personal purchases, an insurance program, educational scholarships and consultation on the school problems of Foreign Service children, and a Stateside depository for copies of important papers. In Washington, the association holds monthly luncheons.

Application forms and additional information may be obtained from the American Foreign Service Association, Suite 505, 815 17th St., N.W., Washington 20006; telephone: 393-5427.

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Layout for the Peace Corps Portfolio, pages 5 through 29, by Paul Reed. Cover photo, from India, by former Thailand Volunteer Martha Cooper.

Summer interns pinch-hit for Peace Corps staffers

The Peace Corps was the summer employer of about three dozen college students this year, 20 of whom were interns under the Federal Government's summer employment program. The Peace Corps interns were among 15,000 students who came from colleges and universities throughout the United States to take summer jobs with almost 60 federal agencies in Washington.

At Peace Corps headquarters, the students were assigned to do research, planning, clerical work, and a variety of other jobs in all divisions of the Washington office. Their assignments were meant to "give them a feel of the Peace Corps," says Irene Burdett, who is in charge of the intern program. "They did everything from carrying coffee cups to filling in for desk officers (persons in charge of the program operations of individual countries)," she continued.

The Peace Corps interns—college juniors, seniors and graduate students—were nominated by invited schools and selected for their high academic standing and their interest in public service. Besides working at their assigned jobs, they attended orientation sessions for new overseas staff members to familiarize themselves with Peace Corps policy and procedure. They also helped form future recruiting plans by discussing and reporting the effects of past Peace Corps recruiting efforts on their individual campuses.

The government program included meetings with President Johnson, Vice President Humphrey, and other government leaders. On their own, the Peace Corps interns made a White House tour where they were met in the Cabinet Room by Bill Moyers; visited the Russian, Indian, and Tanzanian embassies; met with former Peace Corps director Sargent Shriver at the Office of Economic Opportunity; and visited Norman Paul, Undersecretary of the Air Force.

One of their most interesting meetings was with former presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater. Through letters and telephone calls, the interns coaxed Goldwater to Peace Corps headquarters for a question-and-answer session. "We thought he'd be interesting—for the simple reason that we'd had no Republicans this summer," said intern Joe Armstrong. When queried about any future presidential plans he might have, Goldwater answered: "If I thought that I was going to be a future nominee for the presidency I would join the Peace Corps right now and ask to be sent to the farthest country."

In addition to the interns, 70 other high school and college students held full or part-time summer jobs with the Peace Corps. All were feted at a late summer reception given by Director Jack Vaughn in his office.

GOLDWATER: "If I thought that I was going to be a future nominee for the presidency I would join the Peace Corps right now and ask to be sent to the farthest country."

Photo by Carl Purcell

Promotions in DVS, Evaluation

Robert Calvert Jr., the first director of the Peace Corps Career Information Service, has been appointed director of the Division of Volunteer Support. His deputy is William E. Hintz, a former staff member in Africa and Asia.

Calvert was manager of the Placement Center at the University of California at Berkeley before joining the Peace Corps three years ago to establish the Career Information Service. He is a former dean of men at Hanover College, Indiana, and placement officer at the University of Illinois.

Hintz was the first Peace Corps staff member to be posted overseas. He helped set up programs in Nigeria and Liberia and later served as deputy director in the Philippines. Since last November he has been assistant director for administration in the Division of Volunteer Support.

Walter K. Davis, former deputy director of the division and in recent months its acting director, has accepted a post with the Agency for International Development. During his five-year Peace Corps staff career Davis held a number of planning and administrative posts, including that of program officer for the Africa Region.

Several new appointments have also been made in the Office of Evaluation and Research. Stanley Meisler, an evaluator, has been appointed deputy director of this office. Before joining the Division of Evaluation in 1964, Meisler worked for the Associated Press and also worked as a free lance writer.

Leslie Hanscom has been appointed director of the Division of Evaluation, and Maureen Carroll has been named deputy director. Hanscom came to the Peace Corps last November from his post as a senior editor of *The Saturday Evening Post*. He has 17 years' experience in reporting and editing.

Miss Carroll, a Volunteer in the first Philippines project, joined the division as a staff assistant in 1963. She has been an evaluator since 1964.

Congress allots $110 million for FY '67

Congress authorized the Peace Corps to spend $110 million during Fiscal Year 1967.

The authorized expenditures do not include funds for the proposed Exchange Peace Corps, which was the only major segment of the proposed legislation that Congress did not agree to.

An important new provision in this year's legislation allows the Peace Corps to employ counsel and to pay legal fees, court costs, bail and other expenses incurred in the defense of Volunteers engaged in judicial or administrative proceedings overseas. This legislation was given impetus by the arrest of a Volunteer in Tanzania this year on a murder charge. The Volunteer, Bill Haywood Kinsey Jr., went on trial in September on a charge of murdering his wife (see story below).

Both the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee took exception to the Exchange Peace Corps and vetoed funds for its operation as proposed by the Peace Corps.

As presented to Congress earlier this year, the Exchange Peace Corps was included along with the School-to-School program in a proposed amendment to the Peace Corps Act called the Partnership Exchange Program.

Senator J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.), chairman of the Senate committee, said the exchange program was eliminated from the 1967 bill because the committee felt the concept needed "refinement and detail."

Rep. Thomas E. Morgan (D-Pa.), chairman of the House unit, said that the Foreign Affairs Committee "did not turn thumbs down on the Exchange Peace Corps idea, but felt it should be tried out on a small-scale, experimental basis under the existing authority of the (1961) Fulbright-Hays (Educational and Cultural Exchange) Act, rather than authorized as part of the Peace Corps legislation."

President Johnson later said that "we intend to carry out Congress' suggestion to test the idea under existing authority."

At the same time, the School-to-School program, which has expanded to more than 100 separate projects during the past year, was retained. The 1967 legislation broadens the authority of the program to accept and transfer gifts for schools to nations or areas where Volunteers are not serving.

President Lyndon B. Johnson said he hopes to see a day "when some form of voluntary service to the community and the nation and the world is as common in America as going to school; when no man has truly lived who only served himself."

Mr. Johnson made his comments in signing the Peace Corps authorization for the current fiscal year.

In addition to seeing a day when voluntary service would be common to all, the President said he also hoped to see a day "when every nation has a Peace Corps, and when those who now call themselves adversaries are busy in the labor of reconciliation, and Peace Corps Volunteers from each are working across the borders now closed by hostility or suspicion or conflict."

Mr. Johnson concluded: "The road to peace, I have discovered in 35 years of public life, is riddled with mistrust and raked with cynicism. Potholes of poverty and ignorance are deep enough to ensnare the bravest apostles of peace. If humanity ever hopes to pave this road, it must accomplish an understanding deeper and more durable than the world has ever known."

Kinsey acquitted of murder charge

Bill Haywood Kinsey Jr., a Volunteer in Tanzania, has been acquitted of charges of murdering his wife, Peverley, also a Volunteer.

Kinsey was freed after Presiding Judge Harold Platt of the High Court of Tanzania concurred in the recommendations of two trial assessors that the 24-year-old Volunteer be found innocent of the charge.

The assessors, one American and one Tanzanian, who under Tanzanian law advise the judge on issues of fact but whose recommendations do not bind the judge's verdict, told the court that in their view Mrs. Kinsey's death was accidental.

They came to that decision at the conclusion of a 15-day trial in Mwanza, Tanzania, almost six months after Kinsey had been charged with the murder of his wife.

Kinsey, of Washington, N.C., maintained that his wife, 23, fell to her death from a 20-foot rock while they were on a picnic last March 27 near Maswa, where the couple had taught school for 14 months.

The prosecution contended that Kinsey had bludgeoned his wife to death with a rock and an iron pipe, and that the defendant feared unfaithfulness on the part of his wife, which supplied a motive.

The prosecution based the latter charge on excerpts from a notebook of Kinsey's. The defense demonstrated that the passages in the notebook were quotations drawn from a novel in the Peace Corps book locker, *Ceremony In Lone Tree*.

The assessors disagreed with the prosecution. "I find the accused not guilty of the charge against him," announced Gail Bagley, a soil conservation expert from Missouri. "My opinion is that it was an obvious accident beyond any doubt." The Tanzanian assessor, economist Fred Mugobi, said: "I believe the fall took place as the accused has said."

Kinsey testified that he loved his wife and that he had never suspected her of infidelity during their 16 months of married life. The defendant's mother-in-law, Mrs. Charlotte Dennett, of Riverside, Conn., who had visited with the Kinseys in late 1965, testified at the trial that there was never any hint of unhappiness in the marriage.

In challenging police testimony and evidence during the trial, Byron Georgiadis, senior defense attorney from Nairobi, Kenya, called Mrs. Kinsey's death a tragic accident and said that her husband was "the victim of circumstance."

Among the Peace Corps officials in attendance was Anthony Essaye, Deputy General Counsel. Expenses of the trial will be handled by the Peace Corps under authority granted in new legislation this year.

Far East

Latin America

Africa

Asia

Peace Corps Portfolio...

By its nature, a photographic essay attempts to relate the visual world as it really is. But any collection of pictures—even one from Volunteers—can only begin to share the expansive world of the Peace Corps.

This group of photos hints at the diversity and universality of the 46 countries where Volunteers now work (eight other countries will be added this fall). Geographically, the Peace Corps penetrates the Himalaya mountains of Nepal, the Sahara desert of Niger, the grassy highlands of Bolivia's altiplano, and the thick primary jungle of Malaysia's interior states. The areas in which Volunteers serve cover nearly 13 million square miles or roughly one-quarter of the earth's land surface.

Volunteers are posted in obscure, rural spots such as Songhor, Kenya; Yasothon, Thailand; and Tejutepeque, El Salvador and teeming cities such as Calcutta, Bogotá, Accra and Manila. In five years, a total of 20,000 Volunteers has tried to help the 1.04 billion people of the Peace Corps world to help themselves.

Upon completing service, Volunteers generally express a worldwide *esprit de corps*. But few can communicate the Peace Corps experience. Perhaps it is because of its intensely personal nature.

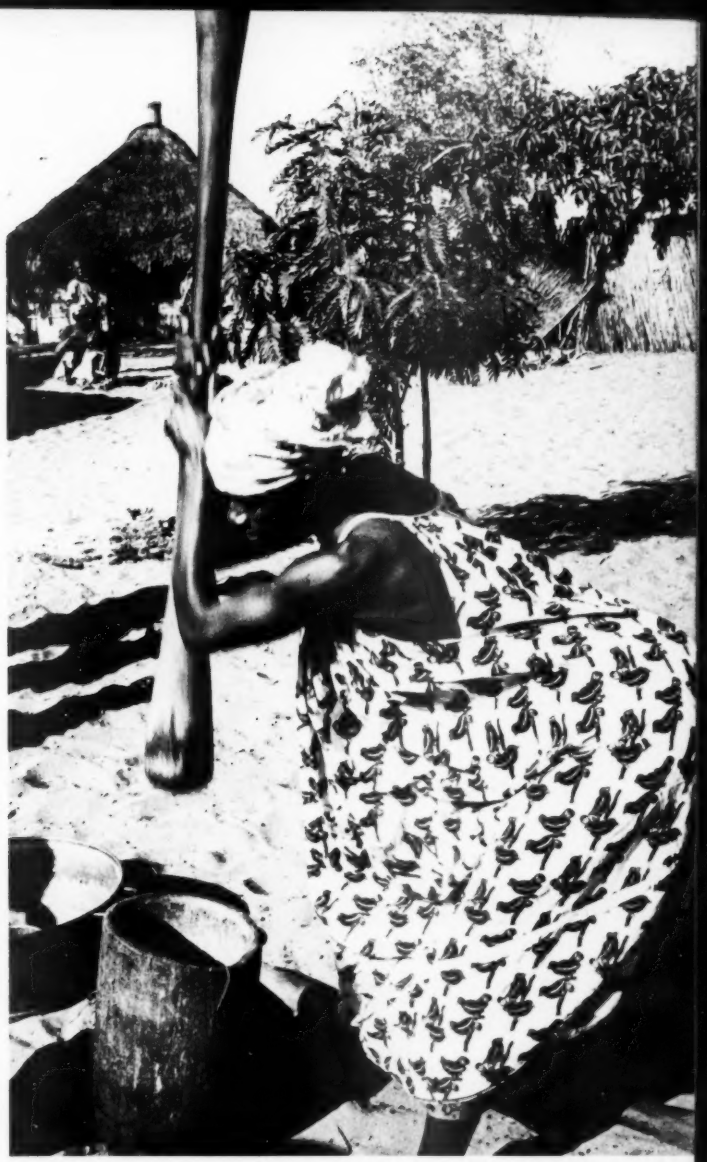
These photographs all reflect a single view—either by a Volunteer or overseas staff member—of the Peace Corps world. None is comprehensive. The pictures were solicited for a "Family of Man"-type book, but the response to the original project was limited and the plan cancelled. THE VOLUNTEER decided to use the contributions in this special pictorial section in an effort to let Volunteers share their world—both land and people—in a new way. The photos obviously present a somewhat deceptive, though kaleidoscopic impression. And, the limits of available material and space add distortion.

Nonetheless, the editorial decision to publish this section is based on a tacit philosophical agreement with renowned photographer Edward Steichen who wrote, "The art of photography is a dynamic process of giving form to ideas and of explaining man to man." This section, like Mr. Steichen's collection, "was conceived as a mirror of the universal elements and emotions in the everydayness of life—as a mirror of the essential oneness of mankind throughout the world."

PEACE CORPS PORTFOLIO:

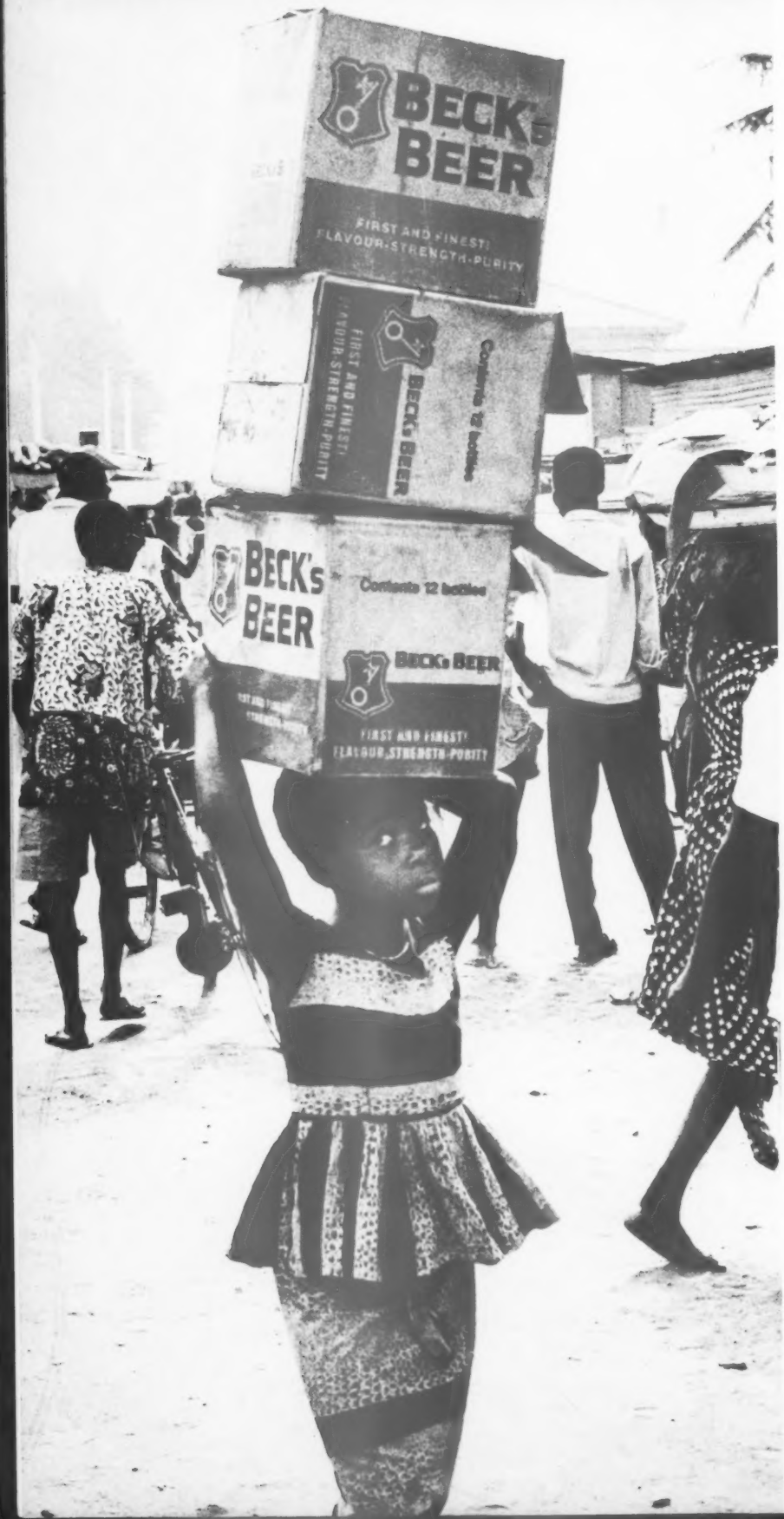
Village blacksmith in southern Togo — *Dr. William Anderson*

AFRICA



Pounding *cous-cous* (millet), continual task of women in Senegal — *Jim Rugh*

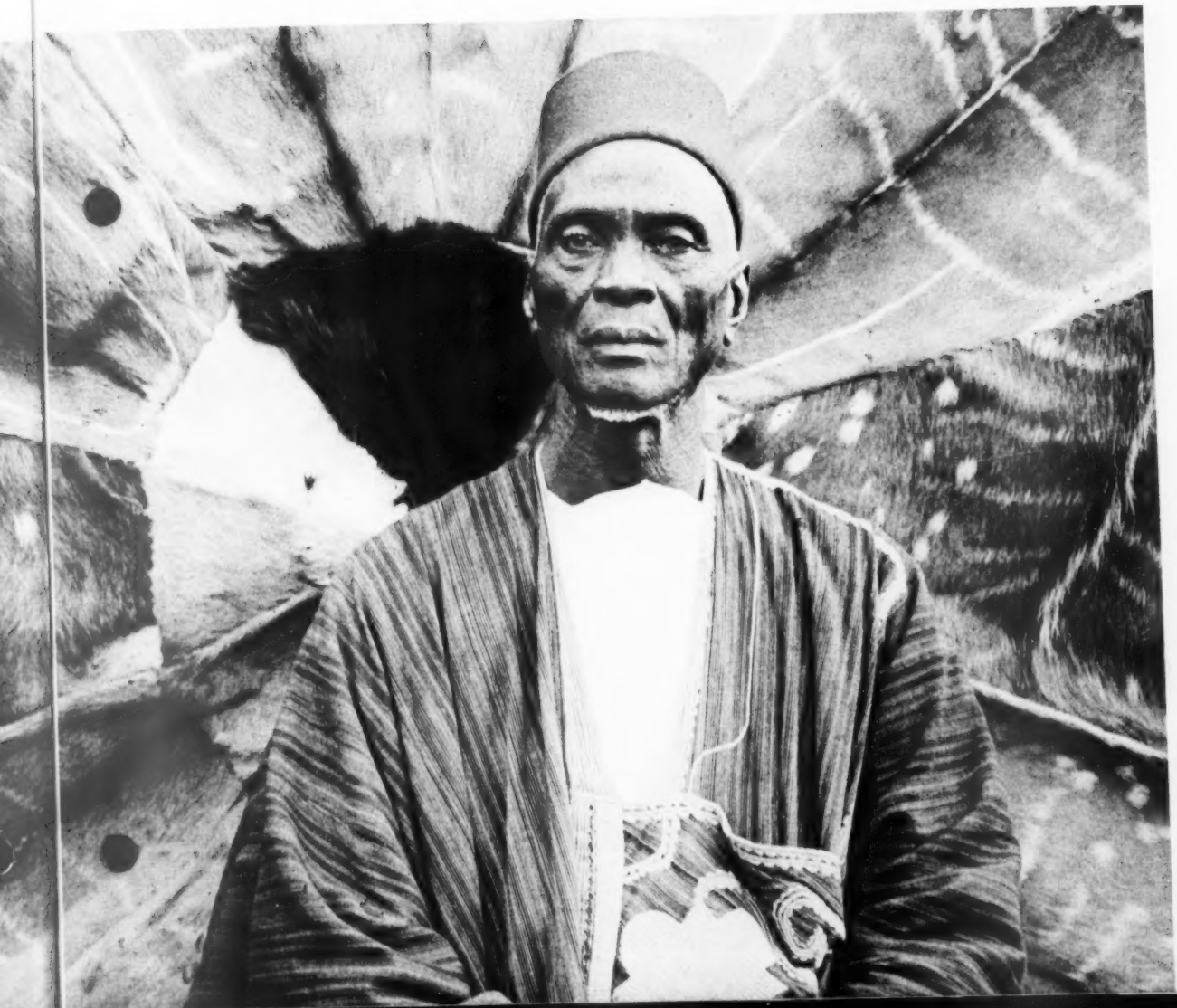
Family portrait in southern Togo — *Dr. William Anderson*



Marketbound in Lomé, Togo
— Dr. William Anderson

Citizen of Nigeria
— Roger Landrum

Pair of cards
— *Jim Rugh*, Senegal

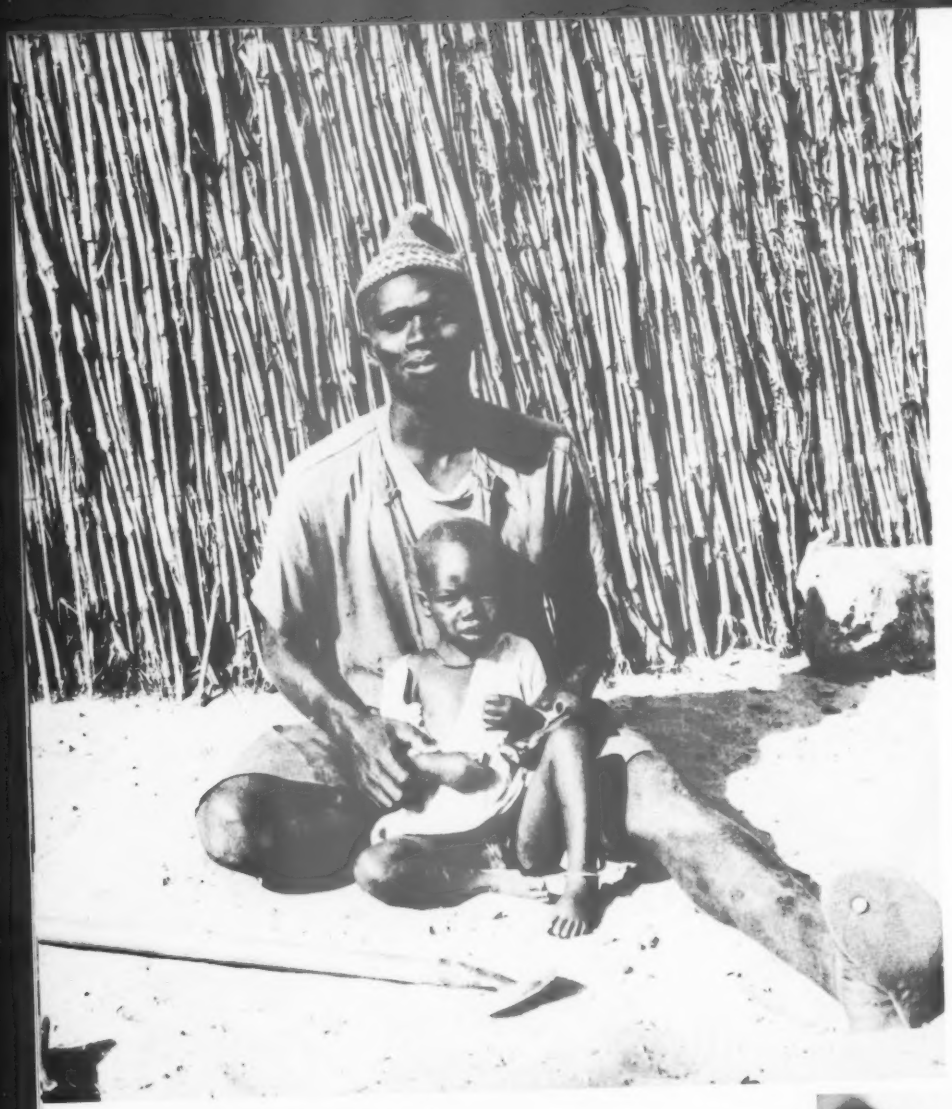


Nige
with

Nigerian market mother
with brood — *Roger Landrum*

A Togolese man
— *Dr. William Anderson*

Hillside dwellings in Nigeria
— *Roger Landrum*



Senegalese father and son — *Jim Rugh*

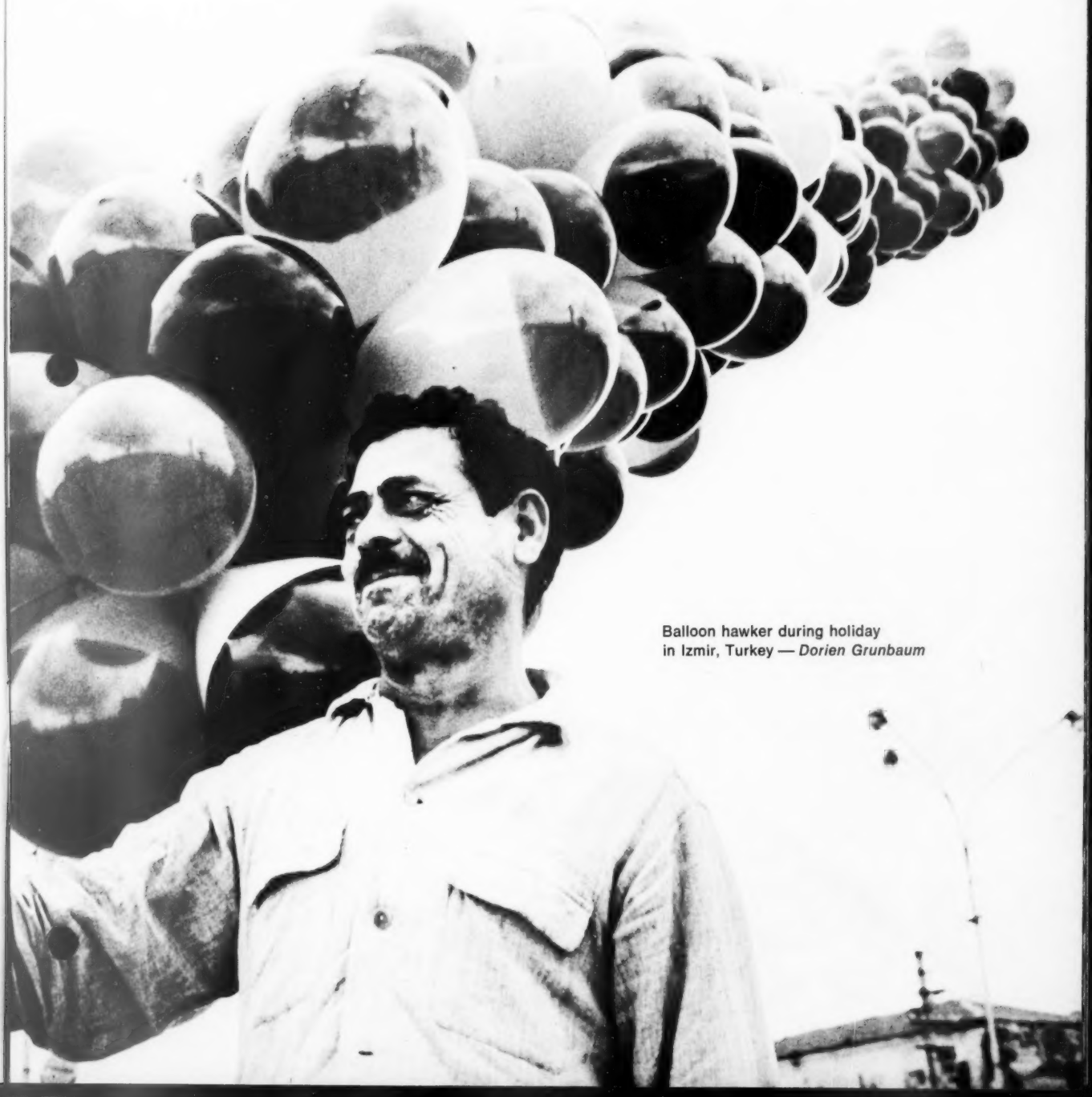
Enjoying the dance in Nigeria — *Roger Landrum*

Peanut planters in Senegal
— *Jim Rugh*

Veil material of Turkish women's *pestemal* identifies Rize region — *Dorien Grunbaum*

Minarets tower above Rize, a Turkish port town on the Black Sea — *Dorien Grunbaum*

PEACE CORPS PORTFOLIO: ASIA



Balloon hawker during holiday in Izmir, Turkey — *Dorien Grunbaum*

Indian musicians — *Martha Cooper*

Senior citizen of India
— *Martha Cooper*

Religious baubles and beads
in an Indian market
— *Martha Cooper*

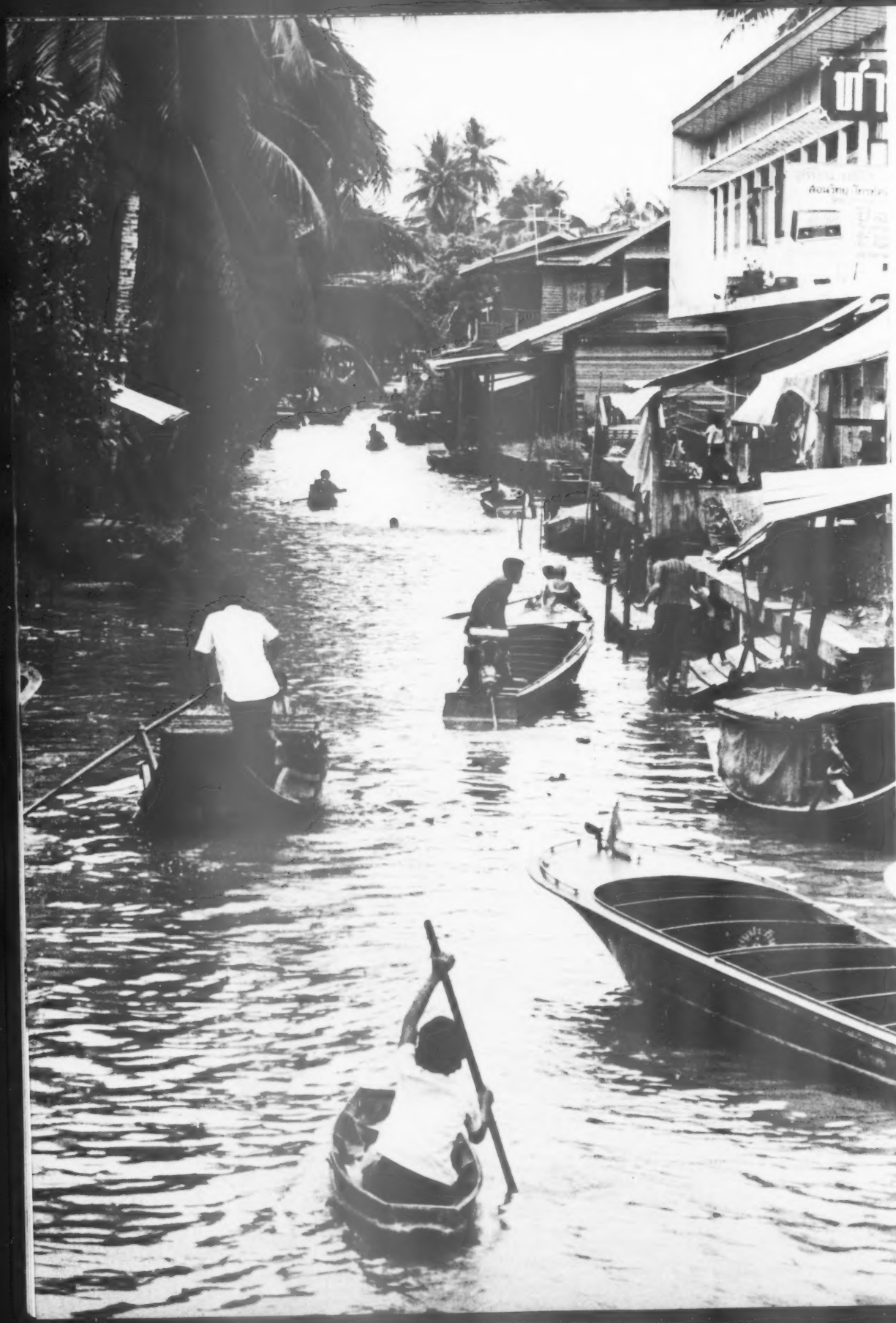
PEACE CORPS PORTFOLIO: THE FAR E

Thai art — *Jack Reynolds*

Gong music at Paper Bazaar in Sabah — *Jesse Zellner*

R EAST

Sarawak child and playmates
— *Gary McMurry*



Buddhist abbot and monks in T[illegible]nowdah — *Charlotte Hutchison*

Thailand thoroughfare — *Jesse Zellner*

[illegible]Preparing tapioca beer [illegible] Sabah longhouse — *Philip Peterson*

Shoemaker's shop in Casa Rosada area of Arequipa, Peru — *Richard Baldinger*

PEACE CORPS PORTFOLIO:

LATIN AMERICA

Cubeo Indian during festive *cachiri* dance in Mitu, Colombia — *Charles M. Fitch*

Plaza of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala — *Frances Jane Hoctor*

Cha[illegible]ndian visits Quibdo, Co[illegible]bia, market to sell *pauwhil*, a wild fowl — *Charles M. Fitch*

Peruvian art: a *papier-mâché* giraffe — *Richard Baldinger*

In the Peruvian sierra, Indians use llamas as beasts of burden and sources of meat and clothing — *Richard Baldinger*

Urban renewal site in A[illegible]pa, Peru — *Richard Baldinger*

El cuaderno: a Peruvian student copies lesson in text-notebook — *Richard Baldinger*

Disarming Peruvian nursery schooler — *Richard Baldinger*

Quechua Indian women walk to church through salt plain near El Misti volcano in southern Peru — *Richard Baldinger*

Dwelling in Iquitos, Peru — *Richard Baldinger*

...io Indian mother and children, Colombia — *Charles M. Fitch*

LETTERS TO THE VOLUNTEER

Pans publication

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I hoped there had been a mistake. But then another installment of *Peace Corps News* arrived. Most Volunteers won't take *Peace Corps News* seriously enough to feel indignant. Many will never read it at all. Nonetheless, few Volunteers could possibly be pleased to receive such blatant press-release hodge-podge that someone—for God knows what reason—is sending us. It is sad that Washington could be so out of step with Volunteers.

BRIAN MCLAUGHLIN
Simanggang, Sarawak

Editor's note: For reader McLaughlin, no News *will be good news.* Peace Corps News, *a compilation of news clippings about the Peace Corps, is no longer being distributed to Volunteers. It was designed as an internal publication for Washington staff; two issues inadvertently were circulated to Volunteers.*

A team approach

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I find the training approach described in the July VOLUNTEER interesting, an improvement on the regimen we submitted ourselves to at Puerto Rico a year ago, but somehow still poorly adapted to the needs of the Volunteer in the field in Latin America. This judgment might be due to the frustration of seeing so much that needs to be done and not being able to do it, or a carryover from my Guatemalan friends who introduce one another as *un gran revolucionario* and who are anxious to get on with the business of their country. But somewhere in training, I think that someone ought to talk about "urgency." And about "effectiveness."

Development is not a problem in economics for Central America. It is not being able to get credit to buy good corn seed. Or it is cutting your hand on a machete and having to wait two hours for a bus to take you to a nurse that is three more hours away. Or it is schools—school buildings without teachers, students without books. It is having to sell your crop for less than it cost you to produce it because your cooperative does not work. It is malnutrition, sickness, poor housing, and discrimination. To the people, development is an urgent and present necessity.

In such a situation it is not inappropriate to talk about "effectiveness." The word sounds like too much business in a person-oriented program; but on the other hand if there is this sense of urgency, then it is almost immoral to be inefficient. I do not want to try to justify a need for jeeps or for two-way radios or other paraphernalia. On the contrary, we need a person-oriented approach to being effective.

The new Puerto Rican training program tries "to prepare the Volunteer to undertake a kind of total role as a change agent whatever his technical specialty . . ." which is clearly an excellent goal except that it is still oriented toward the individual Volunteer working alone on his site. I submit that this is one of the greatest hindrances to full effectiveness in some field situations. As an alternative, I could see a team of change agents with complementary technical skills, a coordinated attack in conjunction with host country agencies on the problems of one area or of a region.

The Peace Corps in Latin America already has some experience in this area. In many countries some Volunteers are assigned especially to credit cooperatives and act as organizers throughout the country, thus enabling, supporting and rendering more effective the field Volunteer. In another instance, some countries have a Volunteer assigned to work with the School-to-School construction program in much the same way. These *agentes ambulantes* (roving agents) are a kind of inner organizational strength for the Peace Corps in the country. I see no need, however, for such examples to be confined to the national level.

The team approach is particularly suited to urban areas, for coordination of Volunteers in different neighborhoods of the same town. But such an approach would also be helpful in rural areas where cooperation and coordination among Volunteers could overcome the need for transportation. A division of responsibilities among Volunteers in a given area, instead of each Volunteer trying to handle everything in his sector, could improve their work and make it more satisfying. The idea of inner organizational strength could improve effectiveness of a regional or area program without detracting from a person-oriented approach.

I suggest that the situation in many Volunteer sites requires such an approach. There is, in many sites, this sense of urgency mentioned previously. There is need for effective service. And there is, I believe, a developing sense of the need for communication and coordination among Volunteers who are working in the same area, be it a city and its *barrios*, or a land reform and colonization program. Volunteers differ, and sites differ; but I think the next experimental direction training might take would be to prepare a team of Volunteers, a team that as a group and as individuals would "undertake a kind of total role" as change agent with complementary organizational, technical and professional skills.

ROBERT C. ALEXANDER
Suchitepéquez, Guatemala

Questions resources

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I have recently read the article in the July VOLUNTEER concerning Puerto Rico's unstructured training programs.

"It's the whole idea of: look into yourself for resources . . ." I wonder if it has been considered that the resources a Volunteer is likely to find within himself are seldom those the host country will find a use for.

"The technical skill (if any) is perceived as a kind of peg to hang a way of life on . . ." Even in context the statement is so vague that one can only conjecture as to its meaning, but how many Peace Corps host countries are aware that, in at least some training, technical skills have been so casually dismissed and that the emphasis is now to be on "a way of life"?

It is undoubtedly true that "It's impossible to be adequately trained," as some of the Puerto Rico Volunteers stated; is that to be considered an argument *for* unstructured training?

In any Peace Corps host country there are a distressing number of Volunteers who have become bitter as they have become increasingly aware of the needs around them, and of the trivial nature of their job and train-

ing in the face of those needs. Their own consequent feeling of uselessness they might find supportable, but that the nationals also patently find them useless is too much to bear. They commonly retreat into bitterness and cynicism, directed both against the Peace Corps and the host country. Their presence is harmful to everyone concerned, not least to they themselves.

One of many Peace Corps cute sayings has been, "Don't just do something—stand there!" Are we now to take it as a statement of policy?

JOHN D. ERICKSON
Salcedo, Cotopaxi,
Ecuador

Photo credit due

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

Much as I should like to claim those fine photos which made my story on a Peace Corps marriage—Turkish style superfluous (August VOLUNTEER), kindly place on the record they were taken by Andy Gould, a Volunteer who recently completed two years in community development at the village of Yanciklar in Thrace.

Please continue your efforts to prevent the Peace Corps from becoming just another government bureau and *kolay gelsin*. (May your work be easy!)

HOLLIS BURKE
Ankara, Turkey

Editor's note: Our thanks to author Burke and photographer Gould.

Orchids to Maturín

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

Having just read the August issue of THE VOLUNTEER, I wish to state that the article entitled "Five Volunteers speak out" deserves an orchid. It is well written and to the point.

As Papal volunteers in Peru for three years, we were able to observe at close hand the work of the Peace Corps and had close ties with many of them.

We shared our experiences over many a meal. They are, on the whole, a fine group, but someone should take heed of their suggestions in this article to better the Peace Corps both in the field and to make better use of the Volunteers' experiences after they leave.

MARIE A. KNOWLES
Hyde Park, Mass.

Memorandum

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Going out in style

DATE: October, 1966

Bosom buddies in the Peace Corps: Actress Jayne Mansfield took time out from her South American nightclub tour to spend a long night with the Peace Corps. The occasion was a post-completion of service conference party in Bogotá, Colombia, where Volunteer Ken Waissman (below) presented Miss Mansfield with a heart-shaped plaque denoting honorary membership in the Peace Corps. Delighted to be there, Jane cooed: "the work you are doing is marvelous, but I really don't think I'm cut out for it." Work? It was all over for the terminating Volunteers, who danced the Watusi and frug with their celebrated honorary Volunteer until dawn.

Don't speak to Lowell Edwards of the frustrations a Volunteer encounters overseas; he won't believe it. Edwards spent two years as a Volunteer in Punjab, India. Then he spent six weeks flying around the world. Everything was fine—until he landed at Newark (N.J.) airport on the last leg of his trip home. Along with thousands of other would-be air passengers, he was grounded by the recent U.S. airline strike. "Just think," said Edwards, "all the way around the world and now this. I guess I'll have to take the bus."

□ □ □

Even carefully reading the instructions didn't help Nigeria Volunteer Hal McAvoy clarify the treatment of snakebite. A Peace Corps staff member had left a snakebite anti-venom kit at McAvoy's house, accompanied by the following note:

"The doctor says it is not necessary to refrigerate it, but that it keeps its potency longer that way. One is for vipers, I think; the other for all other types. One must be administered intravenously to have any effect; the other is fatal when shot through a vein. I've forgotten which is which."

Photos by Thomas J. Grill

As friend looks on, trainee Chester Davis (far left) ladles drink at youth center where he helped start school lunch program. Trainee Karen Reidy (right) talks with youths in neighborhood where she works as a community organizer at a housing project.

D. C. slums become training ground

Home rule, urban renewal and civil rights in Washington, D.C.—year-round issues to the residents of the nation's capital—were the summer concerns of 99 Brazil-bound Peace Corps trainees at Georgetown University.

The Georgetown program, like several other innovative training projects around the U.S. this year, de-emphasized classroom lectures and put trainees into field experiences designed to give practical help in their overseas jobs.

The Georgetown trainees, who will work in engineering, school lunch and university education programs in both rural areas and urban slums in Brazil, were involved with about 30 community organizations in Washington, making house-to-house visits, participating in neighborhood rallies, working in credit unions, teaching in community centers, attending block dances, worshipping in neighborhood churches and marching. They encouraged cleaner streets, team sports, more traffic lights, better housing, school lunches and outspoken citizens.

A community involvement approach called "gripes and lemonade" was applied by one group of agency workers and trainees, who selected a poverty neighborhood and went in armed with ice and lemonade and notebooks. While the citizens sipped, the trainees interviewed them about local problems.

In the Cardozo area, where many of the trainees lived with Brazilian families during their last two weeks of training, potential Volunteers began a school lunch program at a community center.

Twelve trainees worked with two community organizers from sociologist Saul Alinsky's organization, surveying community life, identifying leaders and methods of communication. "They try to discover the mood of a community so they can relate this eventually to people-action organizations," says Father George E. Powers, the project's field training coordinator.

While Father Powers felt the Alinsky project was "probably the most adventuresome" for the Peace Corps, he said that "the most interesting aspect of the field training is the variety of projects. And you can't live in Washington and do anything without getting involved in some kind of protest."

Though field training was accelerated in the Georgetown program, other components of training, including language, also received priority. This was demonstrated during a visit to the project by former Brazilian President Juscelino Kubitschek, who addressed the trainees in Portuguese. It was the first time during his current ten-month tour of the U.S. that he had addressed a group in his native language. A question-and-answer session was also held in Portuguese.

Kubitschek discussed his decision to build Brasilia, the modern capital in the interior of the nation, and Brazil's relations with the U.S. "You are doing a great thing for the people of Brazil and for the future of mankind," he said.

The trainees were scheduled to depart for Brazil early in October. Georgetown University students plan to continue many of the community projects begun by the group.

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